

me. And when there's transparency in the system it helps them make informed choices. And so mom was saying her twins come here. She also said, by the way, they weren't really reading up to snuff initially, and yet they got extra help. And now, guess what? They're reading up to snuff. Kearny School works.

They commute for miles. Some of the families commute for miles because they understand it's a place of excellence. This is a school where a lot of community and faith-based groups come to help. And that is really great of you to do that. And by the way, it happens in other schools too. And if you're interested in how you can serve America, why don't you volunteer in your local school? If you want to be a member of the army of compassion in America, help your schools. Help your schools help each child realize their God-given potential.

I believe that it is going to be important for our citizens to take a hard look at No Child Left Behind, and listen to the facts of No Child Left Behind, and then say with clear voice, for the sake of our children's future, this good law needs to be strengthened and reauthorized by the United States Congress.

There is a growing consensus across the country that now is not the time to water down standards or to roll back accountability. There is a growing consensus that includes leaders of the business communities across America who see an increasingly global economy and, therefore, believe in standards and accountability. There's a growing consensus amongst leaders of civil rights organizations, like La Raza, and the Urban League, and the Education Equality Project. These leaders refuse to accept what I have called the soft bigotry of low expectations. There's a growing consensus—includes a lot of parents, and superintendents, and mayors, and Governors who insist that we put our children first.

And so I've come to herald the success of a good piece of legislation. I have come to talk to our citizens about the results this reform has yielded. And I call upon those who can determine the fate of No Child Left Behind in the future to stay strong in the face of criticism, to not weaken the law—because in weakening the law, you weaken

the chance for a child to succeed in America—but to strengthen the law for the sake of every child.

Thank you for letting us come by for the last policy address that we have been honored to make. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. at General Philip Kearny School. In his remarks, he referred to Arlene C. Ackerman, superintendent of schools, school district of Philadelphia; political activist Rev. Alfred C. Sharpton; Eileen Spagnola, principal, General Philip Kearny School; Adam Bruckner, assistant coach, Philadelphia Kixx, Major Indoor Soccer League; and Lawrence Jones, president, Pennsylvania Coalition for Charter School.

### **Statement on the Death of Father Richard John Neuhaus**

*January 8, 2009*

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Father Richard John Neuhaus. Father Neuhaus was an inspirational leader, admired theologian, and accomplished author who devoted his life to the service of the Almighty and to the betterment of our world. He was also a dear friend, and I have treasured his wise counsel and guidance.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Father Neuhaus's family, friends, and fellow clergy during this difficult time.

### **Statement on Senator Christopher S. "Kit" Bond's Decision Not To Seek Reelection**

*January 8, 2009*

Senator Kit Bond has been a wonderful public servant and statesman for the people of Missouri. During more than three decades of service as Governor and United States Senator, Kit has been a tireless advocate for our children, our military, and our Nation's intelligence community. He played a vital role in the effort to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Because of his leadership, we are protecting the liberties of our citizens while gathering vital information we need to prevent attacks on our soil.